

DC Corrections Information Council

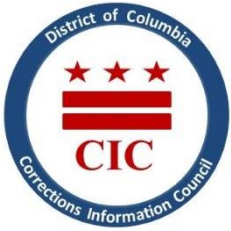
DC Corrections Information Council

Public Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2016

- I. Call to Order Katherine Huffman
- II. Roll Call Present: Michelle Bonner – Executive Director, Phylisa Carter (Awaiting new board member)
- III. Introduction of New Staff
Lashonia Thompson Program Analyst, Tiffany Culley Program Analyst. Cara Compani, Program Analyst, Sheila Walker, Administrative Assistant and Phil Mosby, Community Outreach Assistant who is absent. It is great to see the CIC is fully staffed now and have a full contingency and focusing on going to the next phase and working with the people of the District of Columbia.
- IV. CIC Strategic Planning
Speaker – Michelle Bonner, First I would like to thank you all for coming to the first CIC Open Meeting in 2016. CIC is now an independent agency. What that means is as you can see Cara and Phil moved to a space outside of the Wilson Building. The budget was increased, and we now have additional staff. The two program analyst came on in December and now we are a team. We are now an independent company reporting to the Mayor, Council, Eleanor Norton and most importantly the community.

One of the things we are planning to do in January and February is Strategic Planning. There has been a lot of interest in the community about Reentry. We will have something done by March to show you. If



DC Corrections Information Council

you have a facility that you would like the CIC to look into this year, please notify us and we will look into it.

V. Reports: Publish Schedule

The inspections are on the website. They are USP Victorville, Victorville I, Victorville II, USP Canaan and FCI Otisville. Going forward two reports will be conducted at a time.

VI. Recent Inspections

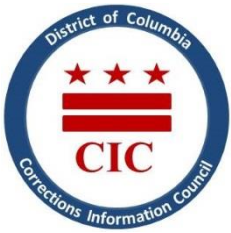
USP Lee High risk security 1,472 people 172 from DC, and USP McCreary. They are always on lockdown. It is hard to interview when lockdown. Cara and staff did inspection of Lee (October 22nd).

Procedure discussed about how we conduct and select inmates for interviews. We also add request on the day that we visit as opposed to in writing, if not a large response from inmates.

Inspections must be done before reports. None will be done (as the Month of the recording) but some will be done in the future.

Audience Member (Ms. Dyson): She has a grandson in Lee that was sent to Rochester for medical. He had two (2) strokes, so they took a piece of his brain out and put it in his stomach, till the swelling went down. Then when they put it back it lead to him being paralyzed on his left side and he is left handed. He is in Lewisburg and they do not give him any type of rehab for that. Whenever he tries to go up the ladder, they come into his cell and take something away from him. Sometimes they do not allow him to shower or take recreation. He was sent to Lewisburg because he could not take a pee test because of Ramadan, and none of that was taken in consideration.

October they went to McCreary. November 2nd they went to the DC Jail (GED, Reentry Unit, South 3&1, and the Process Center. They would like to go back.



DC Corrections Information Council

VII. Lewisburg Report

General population 200, Special Management Unit 18-24 months non-punitive, usually done in a lockdown setting, programming done in the cell. You have a cellmate. The program works in such that if you get an infraction you are “reset” and a starting from day one (1) of the program.

The issue is that people are spending more than 24 months in this program.

Biggest Complaints

Excessive use of force/strength by Staff. Administrative Remedy system isn't working. They reported on time spent in isolation incidents. A lot of inmates have lost visitation and phone call privileges. This leads to mental health issues.

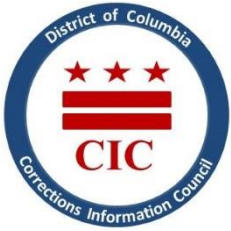
There are people that are in the Special Management Unit (SMU) that have attempted to commit suicide and stayed in SMU. People were taken off mental health meds and having suicidal thoughts. Then there is an export of 75% of inmates being released from SMU. They have the highest GED passage rate and great health care. There were 122 complaints sent to General Counsel Office and only being answered because there were “mistakes” in the others. Prisons do not like grievances to get past the BP-9 level.

Questions/Concerns: DC inmates saying that all their mail, including legal, is being read.

Michelle stresses that if people in the community have grievances that they get send them to the CIC so that they can have more data to share.

Question: Are there ways that the Council can address the process of the reports and look at different ways that the reports can be addressed?

Response: The burden lies in that its organizations, the Reentry Task Force, are created to handle these issues. The push for these issues is



DC Corrections Information Council

supposed to come from the advocacy programs. This is not really a task for the CIC.

Michelle: To the extent that the CIC can gather the information needed for these advocacy groups to step in and handle the situation they will. In addition we do meet with FBOP, City Council Eleanor Holmes Norton. We do feel like our information does, and is , having some effect. Policy makes use our information to effect change.

Question/Concern: Having people that actually go into the jails and get the stories are very important. You can't do the study if you don't have the story.

Question/Concern: In terms of Lewisburg, when you mentioned that there were 86 processed but only one granted what does that mean? Were they granted a trial?

Response: Granted means that the facility admits their fault. Now changes in regards to that grievance don't always happen.

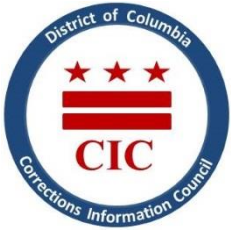
Question: Of the 46 reports that were dismissed because of "technical" concerns, do we know why?

Response: It is usually because the paperwork wasn't filed correctly.

Reiteration: We really rely on information we get from inmates and their families. We don't ever identify anyone. We make sure that the identity of people are respected and protected.

Question: When you go to the facility do you visit every part of the facility or where you hear that more things are going on?

Response: When we go to the facility we usually see all the sections. However, we usually don't see every single housing unit because of time. According to our MLU we can have access to any area that we want to. So if we request to see an area, even on the day of, they have to take us there. As far as talking to people, that takes place where we can have a face-to-face confidential conversation. They can take place in the legal rooms, office, etc.; it just depends on the facility. We speak



DC Corrections Information Council

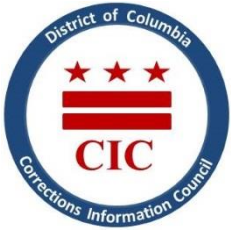
to DC inmates that respond, but if we don't get enough affirmative response then we randomly generate a list of inmates in most units to get an idea of what's going on in each unit. We also visit Special Housing Units to speak to any men or women that would like to speak to us. In regards to speaking to inmates, we speak to them in a setting that is akin to attorney-client visits. There is usually sound separation but usually people are usually afraid to speak to us. Most people upon returning home will come speak to us here privately about it.

Question: In Nov 2012 did an inspection of Hope Village. Where there any follow-up to the deficiencies discovered there?

Response: Over the next month and half we are going to do some strategic planning that's going to include mapping out our inspection schedule. Hope Village and other DC area facilities will be discussed then.

VIII. Community Outreach

As you know we attend a lot of community outreach events and also other agency events. If you know of events that CIC should attend to gather information or meet people that should work with the VIC, please contact any one of us and we will be present when we can. We did get the announcement about the CSOSA reentry reflection periods, usually in January and February they have several events going on and we will attend those, including the Women's Reentry Symposium on February 13 at Temple Praise Church @ 700 Southern Avenue. We also have a Facebook page that we began posting on. We don't only post about CIC but also about organizations such as CSOSA. We will seek to inform people about the information that is available to them via our Facebook page. Something that we'll be working on in our strategic planning is working on spaces for people to come and share information



DC Corrections Information Council

and stories with us. To the extent that we can create safe spaces and times for people to do that.

IX. Special Guest & Food Provider:

Shaun Lightfoot and the First Food Factory. We do workforce, which is relevant towards hospitality. They have a café they're going to open called the Anacostia Art Factory. We also have a kitchen incubator (afford the opportunity for those that are underserved, and low-income people that want to start their own food service business in Maryland. They are talking about bringing this process to DC in Ward 8. They will do entrepreneur training, and job placement because they are interested in that one that is looking for a career. We work with Project Power.

CSOSA, any organization that will send him good people that will back the work. Reentry is somewhere that we are really focused. The best way to contact him is through website: thefreshfoodfactory.com. His email is chef@freshfoodfactory.com. **His link can be found on website in the announcement** the address is 1231 Good Hope Road SE Washington, DC 20020. The most basic way to come into a job is to do what you know. I'm not looking at what you did, I'm looking at what you want to do, and Right now their main focus is the Anacostia Art Center because that is where their factory is going to be.

X. Adjournment